

Trade & Economic Development

HB 1208

Brief Description: Promoting the export of Washington agricultural products.

Sponsors: Representatives Morris, Reardon, Conway, Hatfield, O'Brien, Edwards and Linville.

Brief Summary of Bill

- *Authorizes the Director of the Department of Agriculture to enter into contracts with members of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region, port districts, or commodity commissions to promote the export of Washington's agricultural products.*
- *Appropriates \$250,000 per year for the 2001-2003 biennium, from the General Fund, to fund contracts.*

Hearing Date: 2/2/01

Staff: Kenny Pittman (786-7392).

Background:

The Washington Department of Agriculture (WDA) is the designated state agency for the administration and implementation of state agricultural marketing development programs and activities. These marketing programs and activities are designed to promote the sale of Washington's agricultural products in domestic and foreign markets.

The WDA is authorized to assist in the promotion of Washington's agricultural products by: (1) acting as an effective intermediary between foreign nations and Washington traders; (2) encouraging and promoting the movement of foreign and domestic agricultural goods through Washington's ports; (3) conducting an active program by sending representatives

to, or engaging representatives in, foreign countries to promote the state's agricultural commodities and products; (4) encouraging the production of those commodities that will have high export potential and appeal; (5) coordinating the trade promotional activities of appropriate federal, state, and local public agencies, as well as civic organizations; and (6) developing a coordinated marketing program with the Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development, using existing trade offices and participating in mutual trade missions and activities.

Pacific Northwest Economic Region

The Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER) is a membership organization that brings together legislative, government and private sector leaders to work toward the development of public policies that promote the economies of the Pacific Northwest region and respond to the challenges of the global marketplace. The objective of PNWER is to build the necessary critical mass for the region to become a major player in the new global economy, while reducing barriers to trade.

The PNWER currently consists of the American states of Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon and Washington plus the Canadian provinces of Alberta, British Columbia and Yukon Territory, as well as numerous private sector members.

Summary of Bill:

The Director of the Washington Department of Agriculture may enter into contracts with members of the Pacific Northwest Economic Region (PNWER), port districts, or commodity commissions for promotion of Washington's agricultural products. The contract and funds must be used: (1) to establish foreign trade offices that are designed to promote the export of Washington agricultural products; or (2) to contract with overseas contractors that will promote the export of Washington's agricultural products.

The state funds must be matched on dollar-for-dollar basis with funds from other members of the PNWER. The Washington Department of Agriculture cannot use more than 5 percent of the funds appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2002, for its administrative costs, and none of the funds appropriated for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2003, for its administrative costs.

The Washington Department of Agriculture must report to the legislature on the results of the contracts entered into for export promotion and make recommendations for program improvements.

Effective Date: *Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.*

Appropriation: *The Sum of \$250,000 from the General Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2002. \$250,000 from the general Fund for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2003.*

Fiscal Note: Available.